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# Detecting and Confirming Cholera Epidemics

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## 1. Maintain surveillance

- In endemic areas

- *watch for increase in the baseline number of cases of cholera*

- In non-endemic areas

- *be alert for a single case*

## 2. Obtain laboratory confirmation

## 3. Investigate suspected epidemics

# Purposes of Surveillance

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- **Detect outbreaks early**
- **Estimate number of cases and deaths**
- **Assess size and geographic extent of outbreak**
- **Plan control measures**
- **Decide whether control measures are working**

# **Surveillance in Areas Where Cholera is not Known to be Present**

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- **Surveillance is based on reporting cases of acute watery diarrhea causing severe dehydration (Plan C) or death in persons aged 5 years and older**
- **This case definition will miss some initial mild cases of cholera, but will avoid "false alarms"**

# **Suspected Case of Cholera**

*where cholera is not known to be present*

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**Any person aged 5 years or  
more,  
who develops severe dehydration  
or dies from acute watery  
diarrhea**

# **Surveillance in Areas**

## **Where Cholera is Endemic**

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- **Surveillance is based on detecting an increase in the number of cases of acute watery diarrhea in persons aged 5 years and older**
- **Where cholera is endemic (and during an epidemic of cholera), a large proportion of cases of acute watery diarrhea in persons 5 and older will be due to cholera.**

# **Suspected Case of Cholera**

*Where there is an epidemic  
or where cholera is endemic*

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**Any person aged 5 years or more  
develops acute watery diarrhea**

# Confirmed Case of Cholera

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**Any person with diarrhea  
who has *V. cholerae* O1 or O139  
isolated from their stool**



# Collect Information about Cases

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- **Record basic information in register**
  - date, name, age, sex, address
  - diagnosis & method of confirmation of Dx
    - specimen collected / result
  - treatment
  - outcome (lived, died, referred)
- **Consider a separate "epidemic register" during an epidemic**

# Reporting Cases

In areas where cholera is not endemic

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- Health facilities report suspected cholera cases & deaths immediately
  - report all suspected cases, do not wait for confirmation
- Districts summarize and forward reports
- Send reports by rapid and reliable means
- Reports of suspected epidemics should be investigated

# Reporting Cases

In areas where cholera is endemic

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- **District level should:**
  - review numbers of cases every week
  - summarize health facility reports
  - forward reports to provincial level
  - look for sudden increase in cases
- **Send reports by rapid and reliable means**
- **Reports of suspected epidemics should be investigated**